

that took place last week. On September 12, 2003, some of the finest citizens from around the world assembled in Philadelphia, the birthplace of our democracy, to recognize the first "Interdependence Day".

This historic event brought together public, civic and corporate leaders, distinguished academics and diplomats, and interested citizens and students, to reflect together on the fact that the world is becoming more and more connected. In a global climate that is too often rife with conflict, the participants of Interdependence Day examined ways to best diffuse the tensions that exist between nations and cultures. Indeed, the choice of September 12th for Interdependence Day was made in the hope that the symbolism of "the day after" would encourage citizens from around the world to see that terrorism and war are also opportunities for civic renewal and global cooperation.

Those in attendance had the opportunity to sign the Declaration of Interdependence—a document affirming the interdependent character of the post-modern world—to ponder questions of the relationship of independence to interdependence, and to celebrate the creation of an important 21st century commemorative event.

Interdependence Day events took place this year not just in Philadelphia, but in Budapest and in a number of schools and colleges in the United States. By the year 2004, the sponsors at the Democracy Collaborative expect to have many more venues. Mr. Speaker, I commend those who came together to celebrate Interdependence Day in Philadelphia, and those around the country and the world who are working to see that that horrors of September 11 are never repeated.

CELEBRATING THE SITE DEDICATION OF THE GERALD R. FORD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the site dedication of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, which is located in my district.

This University has always been at the vanguard of education, research, and preparing the best minds in the nation to confront the problems of this world. In 1916 the Institute of Public Administration was founded as one of the first schools to prepare students for the challenges of the public sector. It was reorganized as the Institute of Public Policy in 1968, and the curriculum expanded to include economic analysis, political science and quantitative methods. In 1995, the Institute was reestablished as an independent school within the University of Michigan—the School of Public Policy, which was renamed for my dear friend President Gerald R. Ford in 1999. President Ford is the only U.S. President from Michigan and the only president to graduate from this University. He took office at a dark hour in our nation's history and restored its faith in the Presidency through his wisdom, his courage, and his integrity.

The Ford School is guided by the expertise of Dean Rebecca M. Blank, a former advisor

to President Clinton. She leads a small, close-knit community that fosters academic rigor, intellectual curiosity, and vigorous debate. Regular luncheon meetings and special presentations draw people together for discussion of pressing policy problems. A wide range of student activities—from soccer teams to lecture series—creates a lively and energetic environment. Students serve on all decision-making committees and play an important role in Ford School governance.

Public policy is a multidisciplinary field and the Ford School is home to several multidisciplinary research centers. The Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy Research (CLOSUP) and the National Poverty Research Center are housed at the Ford School. Their work gives policy makers, from Lansing to Washington, DC, accurate analysis and innovative ideas on society's most pressing problems.

Most importantly, this school prepares our nation's leaders. It takes the best minds from across the country and helps to focus their energies to making this world a better place. This school seeks solutions to our most intractable problems, and ennobles those who have the calling of patriotism, selflessness, and leadership. It is a testament to our great state, our great university, and our great former president, Gerald Ford.

Mr. Speaker, the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy is a tremendous asset both to the University and the state of Michigan. I ask that you and all of my colleagues rise to congratulate the school on this important event.

ON THE INAUGURAL BRIEFING OF THE CONGRESSIONAL SPINA BIFIDA CAUCUS AND RECOGNIZING THE SPINA BIFIDA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of Congress' newest caucuses—The Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus.

This Congressional Member Organization (CMO) was co-founded and is co-chaired by my good friend Representative BART STUPAK of Michigan and me. The Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus is dedicated to improving the healthcare and overall quality of life for the 70,000 Americans and their families living with spina bifida.

This year has been a successful year for the patients and families who live with spina bifida, especially the members of the non-profit Spina Bifida Association of America who have done indefatigable work promoting an agenda of hope and research. In addition to securing \$2 million to establish the National Spina Bifida Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) earlier this year, a major gathering of leading spina bifida researchers was held here in Washington this past May. The successful conference played a major role in helping to chart the future path of spina bifida research.

Yesterday, we marked another milestone—the official launch and first briefing of the Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus. In very short time, more than 20 Representatives supportive

of our mission have joined the caucus. As more Members learn of the mission and legislative focus of the caucus, we are confident they too will join. I look forward to hosting additional informative briefings to better educate both Members and staff about spina bifida.

All of these successes would have been impossible if not for the work of the Spina Bifida Association of America and the Spina Bifida Foundation. Under the Leadership of Foundation President Hal Pote, Association President Alex Brodrick, and CEO Cindy Brownstein, the SBAA has made tremendous strides these past few years in helping all Americans—and their families—who live with spina bifida.

I wish the SBAA the best for continued success and I look forward to continuing to lead efforts in Congress on behalf of spina bifida patients and families.

REMEMBERING GENERAL BILL CREECH

HON. JIM GIBBONS

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to pay tribute to a distinct man of service and to join Nevadans and Americans in honoring the memory of retired Air Force General Wilbur L. "Bill" Creech.

Bill Creech started at the bottom as a private in the Air Force in 1944, and he retired forty years later as four-star general, and commander of Tactical Air Command, or TAC. However, he will not be remembered only as a man who rose from the bottom to the highest of heights. He will be remembered as a man who changed the United States Air Force.

The current Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General John Jumper, who served as Creech's executive officer at TAC, said, "No single officer has had greater influence on the Air Force in recent times than General Bill Creech. He transformed the way the Air Force conducts warfare."

Bill Creech did indeed change the Air Force. The General revitalized TAC by improving its efficiency, modernizing the forces with transformational weapons and tactics, and developing the teamwork that still exists in our Air Force. As a fighter pilot, I personally experienced the impact Bill Creech had on the Air Force. His leadership philosophy made everyone in a unit—flyers, maintainers, and support personnel—believe in the value of making things better. This philosophy spread beyond TAC to the entire Air Force. The men and women who are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan today are the beneficiaries of his wisdom and leadership.

For Nevadans, General Creech is probably most appreciated as the "father of the Thunderbirds". After a tragic accident on January 18, 1982 claimed the lives of four team members, many people questioned the value of the Aerial Demonstration Squadrons. But Bill Creech believed in the Thunderbirds. He saw the values that the team demonstrated and knew they were important for the Air Force and our nation. General Creech put himself on the line to back the team and make it the great organization it is today. Even today, in the shadow of the accident on September 14,